



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Studentship: North American Indigenous Languages in the British Library's Post-1850 Collections

Deadline: 15th April 2019

The British Library and the University of Hull are pleased to invite applications for a Collaborative Doctoral Partnership PhD Studentship, starting from 1 October 2019. This doctoral award is funded through the Arts and Humanities Research Council under its Collaborative Doctoral Programme. The research will be jointly supervised by Professor Joy Porter at the University of Hull, and Dr Fran Fuentes, Curator for North American Printed Collections at the British Library. The student will receive further support at the British Library from Nora McGregor, Digital Curator of the Digital Scholarship department, and from a secondary team at the forefront of indigenous language studies that includes, Professor Dale Turner (Anishinaabe), Department of Native Studies, Dartmouth College; Mishiikenh; Vernon Altiman, (Anishinaabe) Lecturer, Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures, Queen's University, Ontario; Professor Marianne Mithun, President of the Association of American Linguistics, University of California, Santa Barbara.

The successful candidate will undertake interdisciplinary transnational research on '**NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN THE BRITISH LIBRARY'S POST-1850S COLLECTIONS**' that engages with current debates about the role of libraries in collecting, preserving and promoting indigenous languages, and the ethical issues that such activities raise.

The successful candidate would be expected to develop the research topic for the PhD thesis around their own interests and expertise, within the collaborative framework of the project detailed below.

The Project

This role poses an exciting opportunity to explore the practical and ethical issues in employing and promoting digital research methods, tools and technologies to the study of the indigenous record; and developing recommendations as to a sustainable future collections practice which balances the interests of indigenous communities, the British Library, and researchers.

The student will be encouraged in year one to use Student Development Funding (see below) and institutional funding to complete one or more short but intensive indigenous language competence courses run by secondary co-supervisor Mishiikenh in Ontario. They will use this acquired knowledge of Anishinaabe and work as closely as possible with indigenous communities so as to generate the first survey, identification & tagging of indigenous language holdings in a series of BL collections and to identify and improve catalogue records in relation to indigenous languages. The student will begin by engaging specifically with BL Boarding School publications and the variety of material therein (primers, reference texts and indigenous creative output), before going on to explore dictionaries and religious texts in translation, as well as 20th century Native newspapers, activist campaign materials and literature by indigenous authors and poets. To help comprehend this work in indigenous context, they will be encouraged to explore methodologies linked to the indigenizing of both digital humanities research and collection practice, including 'up-streaming', analysis of

asymmetries of power within post or neo-colonial contexts and linguistic code switching as defined by Penelope Gardner-Chloros and others.

The student will also be encouraged to explore ways the British Library could bring the rich diversity of indigenous perspectives, notably those of indigenous elders, into dialogue with access portals and collections containing indigenous languages. A starting solution for this may be the use of 'critical making' methodologies and the use of collaborative metadata creation, prototype digital collections and portals whereby users have the chance to interact with language materials.

Institutional Framework

The student will be registered at the University of Hull (Department of History) but will have a substantive presence at the British Library over the course of the project. This will be important to ensure a clear understanding of the research context, engagement with resources, and promote a good working relationship with British Library colleagues.

At the British Library, the student will sit within the Americas team who curate the North American, Latin American, and Caribbean post-1850 collections. The team currently includes two CDP students. Additionally, they will benefit from contact with the Eccles Centre team which includes an area-studies bibliographer. The Eccles Centre support researchers working with the Library's area collections, and the student would be able to partake in a rich and lively research culture that includes regular conferences and events.

The student will have an opportunity to work closely with colleagues in the British Library's Digital Scholarship team whose mission and extensive experience is in enabling the use of the Library's digital collections for research, engaging with and advocating for the needs of the digital research community, and helping to make more of the Library's collection available online.

The student will become part of a [vibrant cohort of collaborative doctoral researchers](#) and benefit from **staff-level access to BL collections**, resources and training programmes, including the opportunity to participate in courses run by the in-house Digital Scholarship Team. The student will benefit from the dedicated programme of professional development and networking events delivered by the Library in tandem with the other museums, galleries and heritage organisations affiliated with the [AHRC CDP scheme](#).

At the University of Hull, the student will join a recognized cultural research context and lively postgraduate community. They will benefit particularly from links to the [Treatied Spaces Research Cluster](#), a group dedicated to the study of Native treaties, particularly Iroquois-Crown diplomacy and the role of language, material culture and processes of exchange over time. Doctoral students at Hull have their own Faculty desk-space, have access to a variety of Faculty training and professional development opportunities and will be automatically enrolled in a suite of modules and workshops offered by the University Graduate School, notably the 60-credit PG Certificate in Arts and Humanities Research. The student will also benefit from a range of training, employability and development modules run through the two consortia run from the department of History: the AHRC-funded Heritage Consortium and the North of England Consortium for the Arts & Humanities, as well from the ESRC-funded White Rose Social Sciences DTP, within which History leads a programme.